

**MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
of
HUNTS FORUM OF VOLUNTARY ORGANISATIONS**

held via Zoom on 2nd December 2021

1. Welcome

Patrick Kadewere, Chair, welcomed everyone to the second Hunts Forum AGM held over Zoom. All attendees were asked to ensure their name and the organisations they represented were recorded in the chat, their microphones were muted. They were informed that the meeting was being recorded.

Present

Hunts Forum: Patrick Kadewere Chair; Noel Kearns, Vice Chair, Chris Stopford, Treasurer, Rebecca Evans, Caroline Tyrrell-Jones, Riva Elliott, Julie Farrow (CEO), Kathryn Shepherdson (Deputy CEO), Louise Prosser, Keith Johnson, Debbie Drew, Oli Bachini and Dawn Ryder (Minute Taker).

Members & guests: Gemma Barron, Anna Dutton, Tracy Hyland, Chris Jordan, Peter Menczer, Emma Flanz, Mary Place, Tom Rawlings, Beth Green, Anthony Cooney, Christine Mally, Val Musson, Simon Fairhall, Marney Connor, John Pickersgill, Sally Runham, Richard Slade, Sandie Smith, Sarah Conboy, Mark Freeman, Rachel Browning, Melanie Gray, Anne Aldred, Roger Kuch, Ben Pitt, Simon Bywater, Marion Kadewere, Karl Webb, Neil Shailer, Mike Andrews, Trisha Napier, Jackie Hanson, Jo Lancaster, Gaye Vivian and Steve Corney,

2. Apologies

Apologies were received from:

Hayley Williams, Victoria Stevenson, Ceilia Barden, Nicola Rule, Gloria Heywood, Emma Sanders, Michael O'Toole, Jonathan Djanogly MP, Tim Alban, Lucy Nethsingha, Janet French, Graham Bull, Simon Rees, Susan van de Van, Charlotte Black, Kirstie Flack, Rachel Hales and Anne Marie Hamilton.

3. Staff and Trustee Introductions

The trustees and staff introduced themselves and explained their backgrounds and roles.

4. Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on 2nd December 2020

Matters arising

Julie Farrow asked those present if there were any matters arising from the minutes of the 2020 AGM and that they were a true record of the event.

Proposed: Ben Pitt
Seconded: Anna Dutton
(On-line Poll)

There were no matters raised and the minutes were unanimously agreed as a true record and signed by the Chair.

5. Chief Executive's Report

Julie Farrow, CEO, began by saying the last 18 months had been a roller coaster. When COVID hit in early 2020 Hunts Forum, like most other organisations, quickly moved to home working and dealing with the unprecedented demand for support and continued to offer a range of services.

In response to demand Hunts Forum developed a range of new services, often at very short notice:

- The Coronavirus portal was the go-to place for groups and volunteers.
- The Volunteer Training Portal had 24/7 access on everything new volunteers needed to know to keep themselves and the people they supported safe.
- Development of a Recognised Organisations scheme - working with our members we were able to ensure that every parish in Huntingdonshire had a community group that could help its residents.

Hunts Forum continued to provide:

- 1:1 advice via zoom or telephone - 18 financial support sessions, £55K grant disseminated to local groups – thank you to Huntingdon Freeman's Trust.
- Training – 170 delegates accessed online training.
- Funding Portal - £571K brought into Cambridgeshire this financial year.

During the year staff and trustees worked together to ensure we supported our members as well as we could whilst remaining safe.

Julie thanked the team for all they have done to support our members and herself, she valued the work they do, which made Hunts Forum what it is and they are its greatest asset. She thanked Kathryn, Keith, Louise, Debbie, Ben and Trisha. Whilst Ben and Trisha had left to go to pastures new, they will always be part of the team. Julie welcomed Dawn and Oli to the team and looked forward to working with them and getting to know them better.

Julie and the Board had worked in identifying risks to Hunts Forum, mainly due to the impact of COVID, including the closure of the Maple Centre and the loss of income. We successfully applied for a grant from Lloyds Foundation to help us look at our sustainability for the Maple Centre, long term finances, membership offer and succession planning. Part of the work was an independent survey of our members (new, old, and lapsed). Julie introduced a video detailing the results of the survey.

(The Member Feedback video was played)

Julie said a lot of work had gone into the survey and the team were holding workshops internally looking at the results. The membership offer will be revised based on improvements that were needed whilst ensuring that Hunts Forum remained the organization "that you know and love".

Julie thanked all the Hunts Forum funders and said how much she appreciated the relationship, trust and honest conversations. Finally, a big thank you to our board of trustees during this really trying time, they have been amazing and supportive of our team.

Julie concluded her report by saying as half the members, when asked, had wanted an in-person event and half a zoom event it had been decided to hold the AGM virtually but do the volunteer

awards later when the weather was better and could be held indoors or outside and we were able to enjoy being together again.

6. Chairman's Report

Patrick Kadewere, Chair, thanked Julie for her report. He went on to say that this year had been challenging for everyone and the future impact of COVID 19 is still to be felt. He believed that the organisations that Hunts Forum work with and the wider voluntary community sector play a vital role in ensuring that communities flourish, individuals are supported, and inequalities are reduced.

He said we can be proud of how our communities responded to the pandemic. They came together to support each other and those in need. They quickly adapted their services to make sure their communities and local organisations could call on them for help and support.

He was very proud of the work that Hunts Forum did and still do. Hunts Forum took a lead role in supporting the community response to COVID 19, working tirelessly behind the scenes.

He thanked the staff, his fellow trustees and all Hunts Forum members, funders and those volunteers who had responded so passionately to the awful situation. He finished by saying we should all continue to work together to advise and support each other so that we can keep our communities safe.

7. Treasurer's Report

Chris Stopford, Treasurer, presented a slide detailing the breakdown of income and expenditure for the 2019/20 accounts for the year ended 31 March 2021. He thanked Louise Prosser, Finance Manager, for all her excellent work in preparing the data for the meeting and for all the monthly data for Trustees, enabling them to fulfil their roles.

- Income – The main income is from HDC and CCC, who fund the Support Cambridgeshire work. As HF are the lead body for Support Cambridgeshire, funding is also received from our partners, which can be seen being paid out within the expenditure detail. Other grant funding was received during the year from CCG, Huntingdon Freeman's Trust, Peterborough City Council, South Cambs District Council, NAVCA and Lloyds Foundation who all support the work we do. The other main source of income is the Maple Centre. Rent continued to be received but there was no room rental income due to COVID. This was offset by grants from COVID funds.
- Expenditure – Approximately 50% of Hunts Forum expenditure was on staff costs and these are the staff that provide the invaluable services and support. Other than payments to our partners the other significant expenditure is premises costs. Hunts Forum also paid out several grants through income received from Huntingdon Freeman's Trust.
- Overall Summary – Total income for the years was £393,951 and total expenditure £350,109. There was an overall surplus for the year of £43,843.

Chris thanked Streets, the independent examiners, for their work and support and said the accounts had been signed on 6 October 2020. A full copy was available from the Hunts Forum team and the website. He concluded by presenting the 2019/20 accounts for approval and recommended that Streets be re-appointed as the independent examiner for 2020/21.

Proposed: Simon Fairhall
Seconded: Tracy Hyland

02.12.2021

(On-line Poll)
Carried unanimously

8. Close of AGM

Julie Farrow thanked everyone for attending the meeting and their contributions and closed the AGM.

9. Guest Speaker. Julie then went on to introduce the guest speaker who not able to attend in person but had sent a video.

Debra Allcock Tyler, CEO at Director of Social Change – Debra is a leading light of the voluntary sector, author, campaigner and trainer. She is the co-founder of the Small Charities Commission and was named by the Charity Times as one of the sectors Pandemic Pioneers for her work during the past 18 months.

Post Meeting Note: Numerous comments were received praising Debra's talk saying how inspiring, challenging and uplifting it was.

A couple of soundbites from Debra's talk are shown below:

“Be braver and bolder, we matter, you matter, your work matters. You need to stop being apologetic about your existence. Take more risks, it's not our job to play safe, it's our job to change the world.”

“Stand up for our beneficiaries with less fear. Speak out if a policy is rubbish, either locally or nationally. How are we doing our job if we don't point that out and make suggestions about what could be done better.”

“Hang onto hope...without hope the situation is hopeless and if there is anything we need to be in our sector it is purveyors of hope.”