

Minutes for Board of Trustees Meeting
10 November 2018 11:00 - 14:30 at 39 Moreland Street, London EC1V 8BB

Present: Tamar Ghosh (TG, Chair), Naomi Phillips (NP, Vice Chair), John Adams (JA, Treasurer), Blaise Egan (BE), Donna Holland (DH), Ewan Main (EM), Ann O'Connell (AO), Jeremy Rodell (JR), Amy Walden (AW), Alexander Williams (AWi)

In attendance: Andrew Copson (AC, Chief Executive and Company Secretary), Mervé Silk (MS, Assistant to the Chief Executive, minutes), Catriona McLellan (CM, Director of Operations, for item 20/18)

Item		Action
17/18/01	Apologies for absence were received from Donna Holland (DH), Ewan Main (EM), and David Pollock (DP).	
17/18/02	Tom Copley (TC) was absent without apologies. TG agreed to contact Tom to discuss	TG
17/18/03	The Chair welcomed AO to her first meeting.	
18/18	<u>Minutes of the last meeting</u>	
18/18/01	The Board noted that Alom Shaha had given his resignation, having had another child and wants to reduce his commitments. The Board recorded their thanks for his service.	TG
18/18/02	TG reported in relation to AC's appraisal, that it was not yet complete and that she would correspond with the Board by email between now and the December Away Day, and that it may be included as an item on that day.	
18/18/03	There were the following matters arising from the previous minutes, which were not otherwise on the agenda: <i>In response to 12/18/25 on NP getting in touch with David Williams to proceed on the branches pilot:</i>	
18/18/04	NP agreed to get in touch with David Williams, which she had not yet had the opportunity to do. <i>In regards to 13/18/16 TC proposed having a full-Board discussion on how to spend this money to advance the organisation, and agreed that a priority should be acquiring a property:</i>	NP
18/18/05	TG observed that the Board would have to discuss use of surplus funds in both the December and February Board meetings. <i>In regards to 13/18/36 DH asked whether it would be a useful exercise to map new membership subscriptions against campaigns, AC acknowledged this request, and noted that he had requested the DIT to provide this information to trace trends over the previous two years:</i>	ALL
18/18/06	TG stated that she and AC had spoken on the matter, and that they were not clear what DH meant by campaigns, whether political campaigns or supporter recruitment campaigns. TG will catch up with DH to clarify what was implied and what can be done.	TG, DH

	<i>In regards 13/18/60 to AC wanted the Board to note that the fundraising dinner currently estimates to bring in £40k gross, costing £10k:</i>	
18/18/07	AC explained that AI had been on holiday and the results had not yet been processed, but that he believed the target had not been reached.	
	<i>In regards to 13/18/66 the Board noted they would like to consider scenario planning for 2019:</i>	
18/18/08	TG explained that this would be done in the management's presentation of the budget.	TG
	<i>In regards to 14/18/13 NP also proposed that the Board re-evaluate the skills that are highlighted on the form, and adapt them to reflect more accurately those that are sought out for the Board:</i>	
18/18/08	NP proposed that the board re-evaluate the skills in the audit in December.	
	<i>In regards to 15/18/50 it was decided that legacies and reserves would be reviewed In November. With strategic visioning occurring in September:</i>	
18/18/09	TG suggested that this should be touched on in December and carried over into February.	TG
18/18/10	NP and AC agreed that February would be the best time to discuss this seriously.	NP, AC
	<i>In regards to 16/18/04 AC noted that flexible working was in place, and that we could consider offering positions as a job-share:</i>	
18/18/11	AC noted that the job share work scheme option was discussed and the HR policy has now been amended to advertise it with every job routinely.	
	<i>In regards to 16/18/29 Chair will be in touch about Board social activities:</i>	
18/18/12	TG stated that they had been poor on that action and would do their best to continue to improve.	TG
18/18/13	TG reaffirmed the decision of the Board at the last meeting that minutes should be focused on significant discussions, decisions and actions.	TG, AC
19/18	<u>Management (AC)</u>	
19/18/01	AC spoke to his management dashboard and reported on several targets for the quarter and if they had been met or not. AC informed the board that a "re-budget" would not occur early next year as it had in previous years because it was causing confusion for the Board. Instead, a forecast of the financial position at the end of the would be made at the end of each quarter, including Q1, showing a comparison with the original budget.	
19/18/02	AC explained that, although we would exceed the original subscription income budget for 2018, the targets set by DCAD would not be met.	
19/18/03	AC explained that implementation of the partnership with Humanist Society Scotland	

	(HSS) had hit several snags. This may need Officer level involvement in due course and the Board should be aware.	
19/18/04	AC stated that common celebrant standards would be the agenda for the Northern Ireland meet up in January which hopefully will sort out some of the issues with HSS.	
19/18/05	AC presented the accounts for 2018Q3 and 2018YTD.	
19/18/06	JA noted in particular the £400,000 in legacies this quarter.	
19/18/07	BE referenced the legacies document he had complied and stated that while they cannot be predicted or depended upon, there is weak evidence to suggest that they are year by year on the rise.	
19/18/08	BE stated that he would share the document with the Board.	BE
19/18/09	Following a discussion about the vulnerability of our investments to Brexit related instability, the Board agreed that the Treasurer was empowered to convert them to cash if he thought it prudent.	JA
19/18/10	The Board agreed the following staff benefits for the new Staff Handbook, effective from 1 January 2019: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Birthday Leave - Team Lunch - Bupa Annual Health Screening 	AC
20/18	<u>Budget</u>	
20/18/01	The Board commended CM's efforts for the new improved format of the budget paper.	
20/18/02	AC introduced the budget and stated that this time last year we were trepidatious but that we have been helped by legacies and sustained growth in voluntary income.	
20/18/03	AC noted that we know that we are going into 2019 in a much stronger position and that we intend to continue expenditure at the same level in the hope that it will continue to encourage growth.	
20/18/04	AC clarified the budget allows for continued surplus in reserves. The question remains what if anything we wish to commit those funds to. The Board agreed to discuss this further in February.	ALL
20/18/05	After discussion, the Board agreed the Budget for 201 on the basis that we will revisit this at the February Board meeting,	
21/18	<u>Governance</u>	
21/18/01	AW reported that she has examined the recruitment of ex-offenders policy and it is robust without being too descriptive.	
21/18/02	After discussion, the Board agreed the new policy.	
22/18	<u>Any Other Business</u>	

22/18/01	The Board received a report on recent events surrounding the issue of gender reassignment and public statements on this issue by our personnel.	
22/18/02	AC noted that events highlighted gaps in our policies which would be considered.	AC
22/18/03	The Board agreed that our handling of the situation had seen our personnel treated fairly but also believed that events had illustrated problems for us in relation to issues that humanists may disagree on.	
22/18/04	The Board requested a paper about emerging trends, and that the social media policy should be reviewed AFTER Liam submits this on the back of the above suggestions.	AC
22/18/05	The Board discussed a request from a member to set up a working group to develop humanist views on Artificial Intelligence (AI).	
22/18/06	The Board agreed it was not a priority and BE and IS agreed to draft a reply explaining the Board's view for TG to respond.	BE, IS, TG
22/18/07	In the course of discussion, AC suggested a speaker could be invited on this topic for the convention and IS volunteered to set up a Humanists in Tech group. This would be included in the email response to the interested member - NCVO training (NP)	AC, IS
22/18/08	NP reported that NCVO governance training will be for the 12 January 2019, and that we could have more external training, do a deeper dive into strategy and development	
23/18	<u>Post-meeting assessment</u>	
23/18/01	On a request from TG the Board confirmed they were all content with the shorter Board meetings, the time of day they were held, actively reviewing papers in advance, shorter minutes.	
23/18/02	The Board discussed whether attendance at meetings via telephone was appropriate. TG and AC agreed to put together a recommendation for when and how this could work. TG to send the Board an email to arrange a social event around AWi's next gig	