

Minutes of Board of Trustees Meeting

Online, 8 May 2021 13:00-15:00

Present: John Adams (JA, Treasurer), Tom Copley (TC), Ian Deboys (ID), Blaise Egan (BE), Tamar Ghosh (TG, Chair), Ruth Kaufman (RK), Ewan Main (EM), Neil McKain (NM), Stephanie Niven (SN), Ann O'Connell (AOC, Vice Chair), David Pollock (DP), Jeremy Rodell (JR), Emma Shepherd (ES), Hamza Walayat (HW), Amy Walden (AW).

In attendance: Andrew Copson (AC, Chief Executive and Company Secretary), Tony Pinkney (TPi, EA to CEO) Minutes.

Item		Action	Deadline
06/21	<u>Procedural Matters</u>		
06/21/01	Apologies for absence: Imtiaz Shams (up to 07/21/04)		
06/21/02	Declarations of interests: Emma Shepherd and Iain Deboys as Trustees for Wales and Northern Ireland respectively. RK as school speaker.		
06/21/03	Minutes of the last meeting: the minutes of the meeting held on 20 February 2021 were approved with no amendments.		
07/21	<u>Management</u>		
07/21/01	AC presented the Board with his management update, including the management, international, media coverage, and stakeholder engagement quarterly reports available on the Trustee area, as well as the monthly VIG reports.		
07/21/02	AC presented the 2021Q1 accounts, reporting that we had an operating deficit of £22k against a budgeted deficit of £212k. Our 2021 performance was, for income, notably higher than forecast (+14% variance), while expenditure was 19% under forecast. We received £44k legacy income. <u>We therefore show a net surplus of £22k compared to a budgeted deficit of £212k.</u>		
07/21/03	Discussion was held of two reputational incidents as recorded in the confidential minutes.		
07/21/04	AC updated the Board on the status of the Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion work, which was proceeding with the establishment of an EDI Action Group to pursue work across all dimensions of Humanists UK.		

07/21/05	It was agreed the Board would be updated on the development of EDI work on a quarterly basis, and noted that some EDI related matters were a Board-level responsibility so the Board would be involved in that way too. In addition, it was noted that performance indicators related to EDI would be included alongside other KPIs in standard reporting.	AC	
08/21	<u>Annual Report</u>		
08/21/01	AC presented the Annual Report and AGM paper.		
08/21/02	The Board adopted the Annual Report and Accounts for 2020 with minor amendments and authorised the Chair and Treasurer to sign them.		
08/21/03	The Board agreed to consider a paper on the structure of the annual report in July, to include the possibility of reviewing the structure by a sub-group of the Board. JR, DP, and JA agreed to volunteer for the sub-committee.	AC	23 July
08/21/04	The Board authorised the Chair to sign the letter of representation.	TG	
08/21/05	The Board received the auditors' management letter and discussed its contents, especially the reference to surplus funds which the Board recognised should be explained at the AGM with agreed plans for addressing the issue to be presented.	JA	27 June
08/21/06	The Board approved the AGM notice and agenda, to be circulated to members with the Annual Report and Accounts on 10 May with information about the AGM as agreed by the Board in February (03/21/15).	AC	10 May
08/21/07	The Board noted that six candidates submitted nominations to stand for the Board. Four were accepted after consideration by the Board Recruitment Subcommittee and, given that there are five vacancies, those candidates will be submitted for election to the AGM.		
09/21	<u>Governance</u>		
	The Board noted that the Board Recruitment subcommittee had reviewed the efficacy of the appointments of a trustee from Wales and a trustee from Northern Ireland. Their conclusion was that the system has worked well and should now become part of our rules.		

	<p>The Board resolved to amend the Byelaws with the following addition:</p> <p><i>Appointment of Board Members</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>a. Appointment of Board members will be made following advertisement and a process of interviews by the Board Recruitment Subcommittee.</i> <i>b. In order to guarantee that the Board contains perspectives from Wales, one vacancy for an appointed Board member will be filled by a member resident in Wales with experience and knowledge of Humanists UK work in Wales.</i> <i>c. In order to guarantee that the Board contains perspectives from Northern Ireland, one vacancy for an appointed Board member will be filled by a member resident in Northern Ireland with experience and knowledge of Humanists UK work in Northern Ireland.</i> 		
	<p>The Board agreed that this Byelaw would be reviewed at the July 2024 Board meeting, at which time it would also consider an appointment from Scotland.</p>	Board	July 2024
09/21/01	<p>The Board noted the plan as set out below for officer succession.</p> <p>A mitigation to be added to the risk register to try and make sure that Officers' Terms of Office are staggered, so that there is no more than one change in any one year.</p>		
09/21/02	<p>The Board noted that there were no amendments proposed to the Trustees' Handbook and that the review process for the Handbook from 2022 onwards would allow for all trustees to comment and suggest revisions for the Vice-chair's consideration in advance.</p>		
09/21/03	<p>The Board discussed enhancements of the maternity leave policy and agreed the following revisions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To offer a payment to returners of £350 • To increase maternity (and related) pays as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ for first 6 weeks of maternity leave employees receive full pay (no change), ○ for 9 weeks they receive 75% pay (change from 50%) ○ for remaining leave they are paid at the statutory rate (no change). 	CM	
09/21/04	<p>The Board agreed to defer further review of other aspects of our policy (returner support systems, service record, any other duration of paid leave and amounts, frequency of policy</p>		

	reviews) until the coming into post of new HR staff, who will bring a greater degree of expertise to this area.		
09/21/05	The Board agreed that changes to maternity and related leave policies should be made immediately and communicated now rather than in the normal annual terms and conditions review.	AC	
09/21/06	The Board discussed the adoption of a new Environmental Policy.		
09/21/07	The Board recognised the enormous importance of addressing the environmental threats we face. It also recognised the views of those members and supporters who see campaigning in this field to be an expression of their humanism. Equally, the Board recognised its responsibility to adhere to Humanists UK's charitable Objects, and to act within the constraints of its resources and areas of expertise, in line with its long-standing policy not to duplicate the work of other secular organisations working on environmental and other important issues, but rather to support them in other ways, such as by encouraging members to support them, or supporting particular campaigns, or joining coalitions, as appropriate.		
09/21/08	The Board concluded that the environmental policy appended to these minutes would strike the right balance and adopted the policy.		
09/21/09	It was agreed the carbon audit report referred to in the Environmental policy will be shared with the Board when conducted.	AC	
09/21/10	It was agreed the Board will review the Environmental policy every three years.	Board	May 2024
10/21	<u>Any Other Business:</u> Organisational Stress (JR)		
10/21/01	The Board noted JR comments on staff workloads and the stress under which the organisation was operating.		
	<u>Date of next meeting:</u> Board of Trustees Meeting on Saturday 16 May 2021 14:00 - 17:00 via Google meet.		

Appendix: Environmental policy

Context

One of our organisational values is 'accepting that human beings are part of a wider natural world which must be treated sustainably for the sake of current and future generations.'

Our strategy says we will 'give philosophical and practical support to significant initiatives to meet global challenges, showing how these initiatives rest on our principles of accepting scientific evidence, acknowledging human responsibility, promoting happiness for all, and reducing harm.'

Humanists UK is a signatory to Humanists International's [Reykjavik Declaration on the Climate Change Crisis](#), which spells out the urgent need for all people to take action on climate change.

External actions

The Reykjavik Declaration commits us to fostering 'a social and political commitment to urgent action and long-term policymaking to mitigate and prevent climate change.'

We achieve this by:

- Maintaining our corporate membership of the Climate Coalition, and being responsive to the Coalition's calls for joint action.
- Supporting or initiating joint statements or other lawful activities with other organisations, including religious groups where appropriate, in line with the Reykjavik Declaration.
- Including resources on humanist support for environmental action in our resources for schools.
- Providing administrative support to 'Humanist Climate Action', a network of Humanists UK members and supporters campaigning in support of the Reykjavik Declaration and on environmental issues in line with humanist principles.

Humanist Climate Action's aims are:

- To promote environmentally friendly policies, and to endorse and support the actions of other environmental campaigning groups that have similar objectives.
- To challenge beliefs that are not evidence-based and disinformation about environmental issues, particularly climate change.
- To encourage humanists to adopt greener lifestyles, following the best available scientific evidence.
- To ensure that the humanist voice is heard in initiatives on environmental issues led by religion or belief organisations.

Internal actions

We will make sure that, as an organisation, we take responsibility for minimising our environmental impact. In particular:

- Staff contracts and volunteer agreements will include a commitment to following an environmental policy in our Staff Handbook. This environmental policy and practices will be included in the induction of new staff.
- We will observe existing environmental legislation as a minimum standard and seek to out-perform current legislative requirements where practical.
- We will seek to reduce unnecessary travel, and to make necessary travel as sustainable as possible.
- We will ask all significant current and potential suppliers for their environmental policies and for evidence of implementation of such policies and indicate that such performance will be used as criteria for supplier selection.
- We will undertake an audit of our carbon footprint with a view to discovering how we can reduce it.

Review and Reporting

- This policy will be reviewed by senior management every December and revised as necessary.
- A brief report on action taken in line with this policy will be included in routine December reporting to the Board and senior management.
- A brief report on action taken in line with this policy will be included in the Annual Report every June

Adopted by the Board, 8 May 2021