

Humanists UK

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting

held on Sunday 26 June 2022, 15.30

at The MAC, 10 Exchange Street, West, Belfast, BT1 2NJ

Present: Frank Ashley, Jess Alexander, Emma Barnard, Christoph Beischl, David Bell,, Dermot Bolton, Noreen Brosnan, Tony Brewer, Neil Camp, Alasdair Chalmers, Michael Conlon, Andrew Cooper, Barry Coppinger, Christine Cowan, Adrian Davis, Maire De Buitlear, Iain Deboys, Laura Fitzsimons, Tamar Ghosh (Chair), Dawn Gyles, Christine Hackett, Val Hart, Michael Heap, Roy Heaps, Stewart Holden, Gerard Holloway, Charley Jarrett, Paul Kaufman, Laura Lacole, Karen Luckhurst, Charlie Lynch, Marilyn Marsh, Clare Marsh, Lynda McCleery, Mark McCleery, Emily McCullough, Neil McKain, Bob McMillen, Mary Lou McShane, David Milne, Carol Milne, Alan Montgomery, Linda Montgomery, Kenneth Morton, Margaret Mulholland, Ann O'Connell, Eunan O'Kane, Guy Otten, Colin Partridge, Andy Pepperdine, Lynne Ramsay, Susannah Read, David Rees, Michael Rickwood, Rachael Rimmer, Jeremy Rodell, George Rodger, Amy Rodgers, Andrew Russell, Adam Rutherford, Rebecca Salama, Noel Scott, Eileen Scott, Imtiaz Shams, Nicole Shasha, Philippa Slatter, Maggie Smith, Sally Stephens, Graeme Ward, David Warden, Mick Wilkins.

Staff in attendance: Vicky Ball, Robert Cann, Andrew Copson (Chief Executive and Company Secretary), Sophie Castle, Luke Donnellan, Clare Elcombe Webber, Maddy Goodall, Guy Hirst, Alastair Lichten, Catriona McLellan, Iyabo Ojo, Ian Scott, Boyd Sleator, Georgia Sorrell (Minutes), Rachel Taggart-Ryan, Richy Thompson, Andrew West, Liam Whitton.

Apologies for Absence: Zahir Babar, Timothee Behra, Julie Collins, Peter Greenwood, Calum Irvine, Ruth Kaufman, Ciaran McWilliams, Christine Seymour, James Thomas.

Adoption of Standing Orders: On the proposal of Tamar Ghosh (Chair of the Board of Trustees and AGM), the Standing Orders were adopted by the meeting.

Declarations of Interest: The chair reminded those present that members speaking should declare any potential conflict of interest in relation to any item. There were no declarations of interest.

Tellers: Iain Deboys and Jeremy Rodell were appointed as tellers and the Company Secretary as timekeeper.

Minutes of the AGM of Sunday 27 June 2021: On the proposal of the Chair, the minutes were approved *nem con*.

Matters arising from the previous minutes: There were no matters arising.

Chair and Chief Executive address: The Chair and Chief Executive reported on the past year's activities, highlighting Humanists UK's many successes and the hard work ahead. No questions from the floor were asked.

Elections to the Board of Trustees:

The five candidates for the Board of Trustees were approved by show of hands *nem con*.

The following candidates were elected (in alphabetical order): Charley Jarrett, Ruth Kaufman, Fiyaz Mughal, Andrew Russell, Simon Walker-Samuel.

Annual Report and Accounts for the year ending 31 December 2021: John Adams (Treasurer) presented a report on the annual accounts to members. The Report and Accounts for 2021 were approved *nem com*. Questions from the floor were asked to the Treasurer.

Re-appointment of Auditor: Knox Cropper was re-appointed as auditor to hold office until the conclusion of the next general meeting where accounts are laid before the members, *nem con*.

Remuneration of Auditor: The trustees were authorised to determine the remuneration of the auditor *nem con*.

Other Motions: The following statement proposed by the Chair was passed by a majority, with one vote against:

Statement on the policy of deporting refugees in the UK to Rwanda

From our work supporting humanist asylum seekers, persecuted because of their beliefs, we know the extreme difficulties faced by refugees in the UK. In seeking safe haven abroad, they suffer arduous journeys, deplorable treatment, and harsh conditions. Throughout this hostile process, they suffer with the uncertainty of whether their cases will be fairly heard and properly processed.

The UK Government's new policy of deporting refugees from the UK to Rwanda plainly makes their situation worse. For those asylum seekers we specialise in helping, who have already faced persecution on the basis of being non-religious, Rwanda represents an especially unsafe destination, and a potential site of further persecution and unfair handling of their claims. But the problem is broader than that.

This policy loses sight of refugees as human beings with human rights. Every human being has the right to life, the right to express themselves and to express their beliefs, the right to start a family and lead a normal life.

We want to see this dehumanising and immoral policy abolished and for refugees in the UK to have their claims for asylum assessed and resolved within the UK.