

Minutes of the Leicester City of Sanctuary AGM 2020 Saturday 26 September 2020 | Online Zoom Meeting

1. Attendance & Apologies

In attendance: Pete Hobson (Chair), Shali Bullough, Jenny Dnes, Danny Myers, Alex Jakeman, Patricia Lassells, John Lassells, Helen Everett, Jenny Westmoreland, Colleen Malloy, Tess Newman, Chris Bullough, Maggie Edgington, Eric Nkundumubano, Angela Walker, Mick Walker, Eileen McKellican, Phil Harvey, Sonia Bullough, Anju Baroi, Hagara Al-Katheri, Sadiq Ahamed.

Apologies: Phil Hardy, Margaret Bonney

It was noted that unusually and due to Covid-19 restrictions, the AGM was held in a virtual space (via Zoom), in a manner which accords with the advice offered by the Charity Commission.

2. **Minutes of the 2019 AGM** previously approved by trustees had been made available and were duly noted by members.
3. **Annual Report for 2019-20** Shali Bullough, Co-ordinator, described the Annual Report as being split into two parts – one before and one after Covid-19 restrictions.

Highlights from Before

- Impact report produced and published to the website
- Finalists for VAL Charity of the year awards

After Covid-19

- Kept things running virtually with online activities
- Thanks to Maggie Edgington for working so hard to support the families throughout, especially her work with the Tesco shopping vouchers
- Thanks to Sarah for keeping Soccercise going online throughout isolation, as a volunteer, as well as some outdoors sessions later.
- We're now operating a by-appointment drop in session in the City Centre where we give out toiletries, household goods and food – with special thanks to Joel for producing food for us at his allotment, and to John, for transporting it!
- Margaret Bonney has restarted the English circle, where people can chat and practice their English in a socially distanced environment.
- Sewing has restarted on Thursdays, and Mandy has worked incredibly hard to provide a socially distanced sewing station for each of the attendees.
- Football sessions have resumed on Saturdays, with 14 players the first week and more than double that the second.

Shali explained that the Chapel Garden was our primary method of face-to-face contact now, and that a return to The Bridge would be considered in due course, but nothing hasty would be decided upon given the nature of the Covid-19 issues we face.

Colleen Malloy congratulated people for their work in this difficult time, especially Maggie's work, and asked how online activities were communicated to others. Shali Bullough responded that LCoS communicated via WhatsApp, but also through welcome leaflets and working with housing providers.

Alex Jakeman added that Leicester City of Sanctuary is always present at the Leicester Multi-Agency Forum meeting, and that other service providers are aware of us and know that they can signpost people to us easily.

Danny Myers added that this was important as there were currently 180+ people temporarily accommodated in hotels (not resettled) in Leicester and more than 7000 nationwide which may be harmful to their human rights, and especially for children who struggle to access education and safeguarding. Worse, he added that hotels around the country were attracting protesters which made the situation far more complex and he felt that cities needed to step up more and help with resettlement.

Colleen raised the national city of Sanctuary Local Authority Network and Danny responded that the City Council is committed to joining this once formal decision making resumes, and would be happy to be personally involved in the steering group, time permitting.

A short video about the positive impact of LCoS produced by Paul [surname?] was shown

4. **Financial Statement for year ending 31 March 2019 & Independent Examiner's Report** distributed

Jenny Dnes presented a clear visual summary of the Finances for 2019-20.

- *Starting balance* £43,261.36
- *Total income* £51,782.33
- *Total expenditure* £59,851.23
- *End of year assets* £31,357.46 (£35,192.46 including outstanding invoices)

Mick Walker asked whether the timetable for lottery funding would be impacted by Covid-19. Pete Hobson answered that the National Lottery were being very flexible and he expected this flexibility to continue. Shali concurred, stating that she had no concerns.

Chris Bullough noted that Gift Aid reclaimed on donations seemed low, and asked whether this could be improved. Jenny Dnes responded that we could only claim Gift Aid for (some) personal donations and Pete added that one of our objectives was to increase individual donations and so the amount we can receive from Gift Aid.

The meeting formally voted to receive the accounts for the year and the Independent Examiner's Report.

5. Appointment of Trustees

Pete Hobson thanked Sam Javid for his service as trustee, having resigned in April, and for the energy and connections he had brought to the position over several years.

Trustees proposed for re-election:

- Pete Hobson
- Margaret Bonney

New Trustees proposed for election:

- Sadiq Ahamed
- Hagara Al-Katheri

The two new potential trustees were present and introduced themselves. Sadiq stated that he had been volunteering at LCoS for 8 years and he had put himself forward for the role of Trustee as he was passionate about helping Refugees and Asylum Seekers, and has personally gained much whilst working with them. He added that he works for Leicester Life Links and is keen to support the mental health of Refugees and Asylum Seekers.

Hagara said that she had enjoyed being part of LCoS and it helped give her a sense of being "home again". She became a volunteer and feels as though she wants to do more so put herself forward for the Trustee position.

Pete noted that the process of being nominated to serve as a trustee had involved being recommended by a nominations group composed of two existing trustees and two non-trustees, who had interviewed candidates.

Colleen raised a concern about trustee Golden Ngwenya, and attendance record at meetings. Pete responded that aspects of Golden's life had changed, but he was currently still a Trustee at LCoS.

The proposal to elect all four as trustees was put to the vote and clearly carried

6. Chair's Remarks

Pete Hobson opened his remarks with the following thanks:

- to Shali because LCoS would not be what it was without her and the organisation owes her and her hard work a lot.
- to Alex for his (cheerful!) support on the back end of the organisation
- to Shabana for bringing boundless enthusiasm to the role, and who is shortly to go onto Maternity leave.
- to fellow Trustees, especially Jenny as vice-chair and Danny who has bedded in well in his first year as a trustee
- and to all the many volunteers, especially Maggie who has been instrumental this year in keeping things running.

Pete went on to mention the Big Give Christmas Challenge scheme which LCoS would be participating in for the first time this December and stated that it would require us to improve our digital presence, and that we were trying to make Facebook posts and Tweet more often, and asked people to keep an eye out for us (and tell their friends!)

Next he addressed our Strategy Document, of which we are about halfway through the timeframe for, and under normal circumstances we would be assessing right now. However, with the Covid-19 issue being so pervasive, this was a difficult task, and little could be taken for granted. Indeed, with the threat of a second Covid-19 wave, any restarts should be considered provisional.

He drew attention to the recent Leicester City Council/Labour Party Statement about the continuing hostile environment, and whilst the LCoS is a non-aligned organisation we agree with everything in that statement.

Pete drew attention to the need to identify the shape our work should take over the next six months, and welcomed all members' views on that topic for discussion by trustees.

Shali thanked Pete for all his hard work this year.

7. Any Members' business

Colleen stated that she thought the work this year had been great, and asked whether we could use a telephone buddying scheme to help refugees and asylum seekers in isolation. Hagara agreed that this was very important, and she had been putting this into practice herself.

Jenny Westmoreland that noted as a volunteer that it would help her feel more part of the organisation as it was easy to feel as though you are entirely on the outside during these periods of isolation. Eileen said that she was in the same boat as Jenny and Anju thanked everyone who had raised this issue.

Sadiq added that Life Links has a peer support group for Volunteers, but acknowledged that it is quite difficult to manage.