RWPN Management Committee

18th May 2023 – held virtually

Minutes

**Present:** Simon Labbett, Dawn Bridgehouse, Jim Boles, Ray Maxwell, Martin Kearney, Simmone Miller, Debbie James, Nicola Poole, Daniel Scholes, Kate Laybourne, Andrea Doyle

**Apologies**

Norma Baille

1. Declarations of CoI: No declarations made
2. Minutes of previous meeting approved.
3. Matters arising
4. SL still not had opportunity to contact BAME Vision re a new management committee member due to lack of opportunity. **SL asked SM to contact Bhavini Makwana**
5. PSA annual review: SL has submitted required information to PSA by 31st March but, at time of meeting, not had any feedback [request for clarification on a few points received from PSA shortly after this meeting]. **SL to respond to PSA**
6. Sight Loss Councils (SLC). SM and SL met lead regional co-ordinators from these councils to discuss shared interests, including lived-experience campaigning for rehab and inclusive street design. SM reported no come-back from subsequent approach to London SLC but SL has made contact in Yorkshire SLC which was positive.
7. Finance

Current position: Current account £54,078.66, Reserve acc £10,034.89 Paypal £9,3013.68. Total cash in hand: £73,433.23

Audit. DS reported we have received draft accounts, but we are concerned that our Company Tax liability is too high because the PSA annual fee (which is debited after submission of annual accounts) appears to look like surplus income when we feel it should be treated as a debit which due for payment when requested. Awaiting response from accountants.

DS chasing guide dogs re annual membership payments as they have not paid for 12 months according to records. Amanda Labbett chasing and removing debtors where appropriate.

Financial stability and succession planning.

SL and DS looking at the future funding of RWPN. Our succession planning is geared towards funding a director for 2-3 days per week rather than relying on volunteer direction. DS said he had contacted Carl Freeman from Guide Dogs to put out feelers.

It was agreed that RWPN should pursue a freelance model of directorship i.e. not employ someone directly. It was felt that the flexibility this creates will allow RWPN to better assess the success or problems of this new direction and reduce financial risk.

**Action: SL to formally contact VI Sightloss Partnership [RNIB, Visionary, Blind Veterans UK, TPT] to request discussion around support for finance in tandem with using our reserves. SL to draw up task description/JD based on current work and DS and SL to look at funding requirements.**

1. Organisation name change. Given that members strongly indicated the desire for a name change from RWPN when consulted last year, the meeting discussed a) what messages a new title needs to send out b) the options for specific words and terms c) how we would approach membership to make a decision.

A list of names suggested by the membership was circulated prior to this meeting. The meeting decided that both the words “rehabilitation” and “habilitation” should be included in the title. **Action: SL to send committee members a shortlist for consideration, based on the discussion. Committee to the decide which names go forward to the membership. No timeline formally agreed.**

6. Habilitation - AD said she had made initial contact with the Chair of Hab Vi UK, Fiona Broadley and a meeting has been set up immediately after this meeting with Fiona, AD and SL. The purpose would be to see where we can work closer together and how we can demonstrate a more co-ordinated approach to working with Hab Vi UK to our own membership.

7. Annual Seminar – SL said that any face-to-face event in July is not possible due to the difficulties Dave Bignell has had in securing room booking at BCU. We still need to hold AGM in July and we need to engage membership as much as possible. Agreed to host virtual AGM on 5th July with proposed theme of workforce lone working and burnout, since the subject has been highlighted amongst the workforce in the last month,

8.. Professional study day. Retina UK confirmed re session on genetic counselling, and session on post-stroke scanning techniques. **Action: SL to fix date in October and contact contributors.**

9. EDI update SM and AD reported the work both had put together on an EDI policy statement. AD shared the current state of play. SL highlighted the forthcoming new standard that the PSA are establishing in relation to EDI and their registered bodies.

**Action: SM and AD to finalise for next meeting.**

10. Apprenticeship review. SL reported that the lead-employer, Guide Dogs has now reactivated the employer group with the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education. SL to represent RWPN and SM to support. SL indicated that it is his understanding that BCU will now be involved in the process.

11. AOB – no AOB

12. Date of next meeting. 28th September. We are looking to hold this at BCU – awaiting news of any room booking from BCU.