

RWPN management committee meeting
28th September 2023 – Guide Dogs Birmingham
Minutes

Present: Simon Labbett (Chair), Andrea Doyle (vice Chair)
Dawn Bridgehouse. (Secretary) (virtual), Ray Maxwell (virtual), Simmone Miller (virtual), Kate Laybourne (virtual), Martin Kearney, Jim Bole, Nic Poole (virtual), Sandy Davies
Apologies: Daniel Scholes, Debbie James, Norma Baillie.

In attendance from Professional standards Committee: Paddy Toner, John Fearne-Webster

1. No conflicts of Interest declared
2. Matters arising
3. Current financial position. Current account £56,815.78; Savings account (reserves) £10,064.92; Paypal £10,286.
4. Future financing of RWPN – Simon reported a broadly positive, but non-committal meeting with the Sight Loss Charity Sector Partnership on our request for financial support to pay for the majority of the money required for a director level role with RWPN. It was agreed that any director would be delegating some roles and responsibilities to the management committee. The outcome of the meeting with the partnership was a request for how any potential funding would benefit the funders and the sector as a whole.

The meeting discussed how many hours a Director might be engaged for at what level of payment it should be set. The decision was made to request a five day a week commitment, employed on a freelance basis and set at a pay level equivalent to an operations manager (even though it was recognized that the role required service level manager skills). £45,000. The decision was also to request funding for at least three years to provide time to review long-term, sustainable options. **Action: Simon and Daniel to progress with further expanded submission to the sector.**

5. Organisational name change. The meeting decided on four options for a name change to put to members in the new year: Association of Vision Rehabilitation and Habilitation; Society of Vision Rehabilitation and Habilitation; Association of Vision Rehabilitation and Habilitation Professionals; Society of Vision Rehabilitation and Habilitation Professionals. It was agreed to put these suggestions to a vote “following

consultation with members and committee”. **Action: vote to members in new year.**

6. Equality, Diversity and Inclusion. Simon reported that the PSA had issued their new “Condition 9” that relates to how RWPN monitors EDI within its registration function. He reported that, in the short term, no conditions would be issued to any register holder, but it would provide an oversight of how far organisations had developed their integration of EDI issues into their work. An extension to the PSA deadline had been requested and SL asked for oversight of the submission from Andrea and Simmone beforehand. A priority for RWPN is to request registrants provide information related to protected characteristics.

Simmone and Andrea said that they needed a little longer to complete RWPN’s EDI mission statement. **Action: Simon to submit section 9 to PSA. Andrea and Simmone to complete RWPN EDI mission statement. Members to be asked to provide information against protected characteristics (and in line with our privacy policy) when they renew membership in January. Committee: to identify someone to join committee who can lead on EDI issues.**

7. Retired members category. It was felt useful to allow former members to stay involved and interested in our work. **Action: Amanda to establish a free retired members membership category**

8. Website. It was noted that work on the website has gone quiet. Simon confirmed that no progress had been made since contact with Anita McCallum around a year ago. It was agreed that the need to make the website better is undisputed, and some changes could be made whether any name change happens in the near future. Dawn and Paddy confirmed that the website is accessible to screenreaders.

9. Outcome of Alexis Horam’s input at AGM. The committee discussed the almost overwhelmingly positive feedback from her contribution, but also the need to promote positive messages, particularly at the professional study day.

10. Professional study day. Programme finalized and invites will be going out shortly

11. AOB. Those present in person watched the draft video produced by Prioriteyes to attract new people into the profession. The video carries our logo at the end. All present agreed that the video is a really good introduction to our work. Norma Baillie has said that work will continue to complete it.

11. Date of next meeting
22nd Feb online meeting 09.30 start