



Minutes of AGM 2008

Thursday 13 November 2008 (LVSC)

Present (in accordance with attendance register)

Sara Musgrave
Clare Jephcott
Bill Countney
Trudy Tiernan (minutes)
Derek Jackson
Fereshteh Panah
Kevin Mitchell
Lourdes Keever
Alan Russell
Louise Alexander

Maggie Pether
Jo Mitchell
John Muldoon
Gloria Hill
Ian Parker
Fisseha Habte Mariam
Ghree Daly
Virginia Low
Puck Markham
Ruth Clarke

Arthur Ryser
Ruth Hayes

Apologies

Jeremy Corbyn MP
Antoni Cain - HMP Pentonville
Louise Palmer (Stuart Low Trust)
Cedric D'Amico (Islington Council)

1. Opening Remarks from the Chair

John Muldoon welcomed everyone to the meeting

2. Minutes of 2007 AGM

These were agreed as a true record

3. Chair's Report

The Chair thanked the Management Committee and staff for their commitment and hard work over the past year. He noted that IPR had seen significant changes during the year and forecast a particularly challenging year ahead. The deepening recession will increase the numbers of claimants seeking help from IPR, a large proportion of which will be making claims for the first time. The Chair expressed his thanks to long standing Funders and new Funders.

The Chair expressed his regret at announcing that Ahmad Butt and Jo Mitchell have resigned from IPR. He wished them well for the future and thanked both for their hard work for the organisation. Frances Simmons stood down as Treasurer during the past year and he expressed his formal thanks for her contribution over many years.

He handed over to Ahmad Butt to introduce the annual report and provide an overview of IPR in the past year. Ahmed Butt noted that the advice centre has contracted in overall size in terms of personnel over the past months, however the level and quantity of service delivery has significantly increased. He described the advice work delivered

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by IPR as an essential service to the vulnerable people of the borough. He described some new work that has been developed with the Drug and Alcohol Service and the Probation Service. In addition initiatives to set up two evening legal advice sessions for residents have been successful and are operating at St Lukes Centre and the Golden Lane Campus. The Primary Care Trust (GP) Surgeries Project has been transferred to Camden Citizens Advice Centre from December 2008.

The Chair announced that regrettably Jeremy Corbyn MP was unable to attend the AGM and so the guest speaker spot would be filled by a staff report from Derek Jackson. He noted that Ruth Clarke was in attendance from Jeremy's office.

4. Staff report

Derek Jackson noted the numerous changes that the Government is making to system for incapacity for work benefits and told the meeting about the new Employment and Support allowance which has replaced incapacity benefit. He raised concerns about overall how complicated that system has become. After an interesting and detailed speech contributions were made from the floor. It was pointed out that some advisers had experienced problems obtaining reports from doctors particularly regarding incapacity claims. It was also pointed out that some disabled people wanted to work and work would benefit them financially and in terms of self esteem. There are threats to Legal Service and every effort must be made that services don't get smaller. It was acknowledged there were not enough Advice Bureaus in the borough and we need to lobby for more. Housing Benefits have improved but again we need to push for more. Ruth Clarke (caseworker to Jeremy Corbyn MP) acknowledged the valuable ongoing support IPR provided to Mr Corbyn's constituents and looked forward to an even closer liaison in the coming year. Ruth advised that there had been a large increase in immigration problems being presented to the MP.

Derek concluded his talk by confirming that all at IPR will continue to do their utmost to ensure that claimants receive the benefits to which they are entitled under the law.

5. Treasurer's Report 2008

Louise Alexander presented the annual accounts for 2006/07 to the meeting and explained reasons for the fall in turnover and the £18,549 deficit on unrestricted funds. The accounts were formally approved.

6. Re-appointment of Auditor

It was agreed to re-appoint Susan Field as the auditor.

7. Election of Management Committee

The following people indicated their willingness to stand for re-election to the Management Committee and were duly elected: John Muldoon, Sasere Obaseki, Arthur Ryser, Becky Hind, and Mike Chatten. The Management Committee are open to new nominations. Ruth Clarke offered herself and was accepted.

8. Change to Constitution

Ahmad Butt introduced this item explaining the background to the need to amend the constitution of IPR. Increasingly, funding opportunities require organisations to work in partnership with others and across borough boundaries. Our current constitution limits our work to Islington and we would like to extend this definition to include neighbouring areas. This change will provide further opportunities for IPR into the future and he recommended the changes to the meeting.

The resolution to change para 3(a) 1 & 2 of the Constitution was passed unanimously to now read

To promote the relief of persons resident, working or studying in or around the London borough of Islington by reason of poverty

To advance the education of persons resident, working or studying in or around the London borough of Islington in the field of welfare rights

8. AOB.

There was no further business, the meeting closed