

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting

Wednesday 14th September

Roots and Shoots, Walnut Tree Walk, Kennington, SE11 6DN

Attendees		
Trustee Name	Organisation	Category
Piers Feilden (PF)	Independent	Chair of the Board
Jean Sapeta (JS2)	Independent	Board Member
Jeremy Swain (JS)	Thames Reach	Board Member
Liz Rutherford (LR)	SHP	Board Member
Maggie Punyer (MP)	Independent	Board Member
Natalie Atkinson (NA)	Service User	Board Member
John Kuhrt (JK)	West London Mission	Member
Athol Halle (AH)	Groundswell	Member
Becky Elton (BE)	Changing Lives	Member

In attendance:	
Rick Henderson (RH)	Chief Executive
Jacqui McCluskey (JM)	Director of Policy and Communications.
Mark McPherson (MM)	Director of Strategy, Partnership and Innovation
Matt Harrison (MH)	Director of Business and Enterprise
Giulietta Driver (GD)	Executive PA to the CEO (notes)

For the purposes of these minutes, the Senior Management Team (RH, JM, MM and MH) will be referred to as SMT

AGENDA ITEM	
1	WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION BY PIERS FEILDEN, CHAIR OF HOMELESS LINK PF welcomed attendees. He explained that while the meeting was not quorate, it would still go ahead. Any decisions would be confirmed via email.

	<p>He went on to explain that 2015/2016 had been a difficult year. The acquisition of Sitra towards the end of 2015 had taken up a lot of time and skills, whilst the DCLG did not confirm their settlement until the beginning of 2016/2017.</p> <p>In spite of this, the organisation remained strong and was in a good position moving forward.</p>
2	<p>MINUTES OF LAST AGM (16TH DECEMBER 2015) AND MATTERS ARISING</p> <p>The minutes were accepted as a true and accurate record of the meeting.</p> <p>There were no matters arising.</p>
3	<p>REPORT FROM RICK HENDERSON, CHIEF EXECUTIVE ON ACTIVITY OVER THE YEAR</p> <p>Reiterating PF, RH reported that it had been a very busy year. The organisation has been through a merger, restructure and bedding in of a new Chair, all in one year.</p> <p>However, in spite of this, the year had been relatively stress and event free. The staff and trustees have been great and tried to focus on continuing to work on our mission to end homelessness.</p> <p>The merger with Sitra has meant that the membership stands at over 800 organisations. This has increased the volume and therefore credibility of the member voice. This voice is valued by the Government, and while it may not always result in a win, it is at least listened to.</p> <p>Homeless Link's practice development has continued to call upon the wealth of experience from members.</p> <p>In spite of cuts, Homeless Link has maintained a significant funding relationship with the DCLG. This year, the organisation had to bid for funding and have agreed a workplan that staff are really excited by. It includes work on developing leadership and resilience in the sector, a large data project and more research. Separate funding had been obtained for StreetLink and the Rough Sleeper Counts and Estimates. However, even with this, DCLG is now a minority funder for the organisation due to work on increasing fundraised income and income earned from social enterprise activities.</p> <p>In addition to work in England funded by the DCLG, Homeless Link was increasing its global profile, including working on projects with organisations in Europe and the USA. On a more local scale, Street Link was now operating in Wales.</p> <p>While fundraising and income generation were important, RH would prefer the organisation to be judged on its success in achieving its mission to end homelessness. He would be challenging staff to continue to generate ideas to work towards this.</p>
4.	<p>REPORT FROM MATT HARRISON, DIRECTOR OF BUSINESS AND ENTERPRISE ON THE ACCOUNTS</p> <p>MH explained that due to delays with the auditor, the accounts would be available on the website after the meeting. The process had been more difficult due to the merger and changes to the SORP.</p> <p>MH presented on the finances over the year. The highlights were as follows:</p>

- Homeless Link is in a strong financial position
- Many charities have seen big cuts since 2010
- But we have grown over the last 5 years by about 25%
- Our funding is more diverse than before – much less reliant on DCLG
- We have about £1 million in free cash reserves - up by over 100%
- However, these reserves would only fund the charity for 3 months.
- We have 100% of our grant income for 2016/17 confirmed
- We have sustained a large cut to our DCLG funding but still shown growth due to organic growth in fundraising and social enterprise and through the merger with Sitra.
- We have had to restructure the staff team to adjust to the new funding mix, but the structure we have put in place should enable the organisation to thrive in the future and continue to grow.

MH invited questions and comments.

Non-statutory funding

JK noted that the finances did not reflect reports of a challenging year. RH explained that this was mainly due to Homeless Link's diverse funding mix. On fundraising, MP asked if the 4% drop in funds raised from trusts was a concern. MH explained that in this case, it was largely due to changes in reporting as a result of the new SORP. Moving forward, however, the non-statutory funding environment was becoming more challenging as statutory cuts take hold. Investment had been made into fundraising, and there were still great ideas on the table that would be fundraised for. RH explained that as a second tier organisation, Homeless Link needed to do more to show the direct impact its work has on homeless clients. While the organisation was evidently quite successful at this, more work was required.

Public Engagement

AH was happy to hear that internal challenges had been overcome, and felt that, moving forward, there was room for Homeless Link to raise public consciousness of homelessness. MH agreed and explained that Street Link systems were being re-developed to enable those who report rough sleepers to become more engaged with the issue.

DCLG

JK said that he hoped that reduced funding from the DCLG would give Homeless Link more of an opportunity to speak out against the Government where appropriate. RH explained that the organisation's position was to only take funding from the DCLG (or any other funder) if the work was critical to achieving our visions and mission, and that we retained an independent voice at all times.

Membership

LR commented that it may be useful to monitor those members that were either merging or closing. MH explained that this was already being undertaken via Homeless Link's CRM, and that a task and finish group was looking at branding and the member offer.

There were no further questions.

5	<p>Approval of the Annual Report and Accounts for 2015/2016 PROPOSAL: to approve the Annual Report and Accounts for 2015/2016 PROPOSED BY: JS SECONDED BY: MP DECISION: the AGM approved the Annual Report and Accounts for 2015/2016. This was on the proviso that there were no significant changes to the funders, and subject to approval via electronic means</p>
6	<p>Appointment of the auditors. The Auditors had under-performed for this audit. They had underestimated the work required to audit both Homeless Link and Sitra, had changed staff, and had been slow to respond to issues. As a result, MH would like to re-tender but may need to appoint prior to the next AGM.</p> <p>PROPOSAL: that the AGM delegate the appointment of new auditors to the Homeless Link Board DECISION: the AGM approved the proposal</p>
7	<p>AOB MP asked if there was a way to ensure that future AGMs were quorate. LR and JK felt it would be appropriate to add it to the programme of an interesting event that would attract members. RH and PF would consider this.</p> <p>There being no further business, PF thanked attendees and closed the meeting.</p>

Agenda Item	Decision