

DRAFT Minutes of 76th Annual General Meeting

Held by Zoom Call

31 July 2023

1. Introduction

Donal Watkin – ACO Chief Executive (DW) - noted the absence of ACO Chair D’Arcy Myers and indicated he would chair the meeting as a result.

DW welcomed attendees to the AGM, indicated that the format of the meeting would include online polling, and that there were no proxy requests.

2. Minutes of the 2022 AGM

Minutes of the 2022 AGM were approved.

3. Treasurer’s Report

John Brown – ACO Treasurer (JB) - provided an overview of ACO’s financial position across 2021-22, reflected in the Financial Statements.

His comments included:

- Limited membership growth but positive retention in challenging economic conditions;
- Reduction in corporate income;
- 45% increase in event income resulting from first physical annual conference since 2019;
- 100% increase in advertising income driven by website Jobs Board;

At the same time, he reflected in the increase in expenditure driven by:

- Return to London office location (2 days per week desk licenses);
- Physical annual conference costs (for the first time since 2019);
- Restricted income expenditure on new website platform (income received 2020-21)

The overall year end deficit (£4,631) had resulted in a reduction in reserves to approximately 2.3 months.

The 2021-22 Financial Statements (incorporated into the Report of Trustees) were approved by attendees.

5. Appointment of Independent Examiner

The appointment of the Independent Examiner – Neil Finlayson (Partner, Moore Kingston Smith) was approved for the financial year 2023-24.

www.aco.uk.net

28 Commercial Street, London E1 6LS

T: 020 7255 4480 E: info@aco.uk.net

6. Appointments to the Board of Trustees

The following Trustees were elected to the Board of Trustees (unanimously):

- Katharine King (Society of Authors)
- Ed Holloway (Bank Workers Charity)
- Alison Wyman (Actors Benevolent Fund)
- Paddy Zervudachi (Buttle UK)

DW stated that – with the retirement of D’Arcy Myers – current trustees Jodie Gill (caba) and Juliet Smithson (LionHeart) would be transitioning to joint Co-Chairs of the ACO Board and that new trustee Katharine King (Society of Authors) would succeed John Brown as Treasurer.

DW also noted that in addition to the retirement of D’Arcy Myers and John Brown, former Trustee Caroline Aldred had also completed her two terms of office and would now be departing the Board.

7. Chief Executive’s Report

DW then proceed to provide a brief report to the AGM.

He commented that ACO would continue to focus around knowledge sharing, building peer-peer relations and offering support, assistance and signposting to members.

Reflecting on the experience of member charities during Covid and now the cost of living crisis, he noted that members had shown remarkable resilience and flexibility, adapting to a rapidly changing environment. Key areas of response had included:

- the rapid launch of emergency/discretionary funds;
- increasing disbursement channels (including vouchers and digital);
- accelerated governance, particularly around grant sign-offs;
- continuing digitalisation (again particularly around the application process);
- increasing collaboration between charities;

DW commented on a successful membership recruitment year, with a diverse range of new member charities joining ACO including:

Hampstead Wells & Campden Trust	RSABI	Fishermen’s Mission
NewstrAid	Campden Charities	Society of Authors
Charity Link	Fashion and Textile	IFA
	Children’s Trust	
The Rope Trust	St. Albans Old People’s Trust	Royal Theatrical Fund
ABF		

From a knowledge sharing perspective, he commented on the launch of several new special interest groups during the course of the year, including the Case Worker Forum, Regional Charities group, Scottish grantmakers forum, EDI and Anti-Fraud.

DW also reflected on continuing external collaborative projects, with partners including 360Giving (the development of their platform to enable charities to publish grants to individual's data) and Lightning Reach (the continuing development of their online grants portal).

He also noted the launch of the ACO report (conducted by Pro Bono Economics) "More than Making Do: Understanding the Economic Impact of Essential Household Appliances." The project was managed by members of ACO's Evaluation and Impact Group and financially supported by the combination of ACO charities and funding from the Fusion21 foundation.

Closing his report, DW thanked the retiring Trustees once more and the continuing contribution of the Board to the long-term health of the organisation.

8. Any Other Business

Paddy Zervudachi (ACO trustee, Buttle UK) commented on training opportunities that DW had referenced and whether this would generate additional revenue. DW responded that they had submitted a recent funding application to deliver a range of training sessions specifically relevant to caseworker/grants teams where there may be a (limited) income element.

There being no further questions and discussion, DM declared the AGM closed.