



ERCS BOARD MEETING: MINUTES OF 21 SEPTEMBER 2021 - ZOOM

Present: Lloyd Austin Chair (LA), Julie Christie Treasurer (JC), Mary Church (MC), Jackie Erdman (JE), Campbell Gemmell (CG), Aedán Smith (AS), Deborah Long (DL), Juliet Harris (JH) Clare Symonds (CS)

Apologies: None

In attendance: Shivali Fifield Chief Officer & minutes (SF).

	Actions
<p>Welcome</p> <p>Trustee check-in</p> <p>AGM This 45 minute meeting was held directly after ERCS's virtual first AGM.</p> <p>Trustees commented on the success of the AGM which had 25 members (including trustees) in attendance, increasing to 27 at the 'meet the team' presentations and discussion directly after the AGM business.</p> <p>Learning/reflection</p> <p>It was not as easy to access zoom link via EventBrite – to circulate separate link/review for future events as we did for June Launch.</p> <p>The registration list was circulated to the Chair and Shivali welcomed all members individually via Chat, but in future the list could be circulated to the whole Board for information and opportunity to personally engage with attendees.</p> <p>Noted that it was important to actively give opportunities for less heard voices to ask questions. Discussed that this event was less likely to be participative but that the open and private chat was used well by women, which Shivali was responding to. The workshops that ERCS will host for members next year will be a better forum to encourage discussion/participation from our membership.</p> <p>To continue to review accessibility and inclusion and ensure different methods of communication/participation are available.</p>	



	<p>The membership and its diversity will continue to grow through the work of the Advice Service and Rights Officer. Really heartening to see diversity and commitment within our membership.</p> <p>Important to review the timing of the AGM next year as 3.30pm is not good for some workers and carers. We will poll our members next year to gauge preference. ERCS has recorded the event so that it can be viewed on youtube by members who were unable to attend and also more widely.</p> <p>Thanks to trustees and chief officer</p> <p>Lloyd thanked the trustees for their contribution to bring ERCS to this point.</p> <p>The trustees also thanked Shivali for her contribution to ERCS since its inception. Clare Symonds arrived at Shivali's house to present a surprise of flowers and chocolates which was warmly received!</p>	
	<p>Minutes of last meeting - paper 1</p> <p>The minutes of the last Board meeting 20 July 21 were approved as an accurate record.</p> <p>The decision at the July Board meetings was: 'to review the draft minutes for this meeting in preparation for posting approved minutes on the ERCS website following the AGM'.</p> <p>Decision: the Board noted that the content and style of this minute was suitable to be posted on the website and were content to action from the September minute after approval at the November meeting.</p>	
	<p>Governance</p> <p>Appointment of office bearers: Chair, Vice-chair and Treasurer Following the re-election of Aedán Smith, Mary Church and Clare Symonds at the AGM held before this meeting, the Board approved the following appointments of office bearers.</p> <p>Deborah Long took the Chair for the duration of the first election.</p> <p>Chair: Lloyd Austin was nominated by Deborah Long and the Board unanimously elected Lloyd Austin to continue as Chair.</p>	



	<p>Treasurer: Julie Christie was nominated by Lloyd Austin and the Board unanimously elected Julie Christie to continue as Treasurer.</p> <p>Vice-chair: Deborah Long was nominated by Julie Christie and the Board unanimously elected Deborah Long to the new position of Vice-chair.</p>	
	<p style="text-align: center;">Annual report & financial statements for the period 3 July 2020 to 31 March 2021 - approved</p> <p>The Board thanked Julie for her contribution as treasurer and steering us through the audit process.</p> <p>Decision: following the AGM where members were invited to consider ERCS's audited accounts, the Board approved the report and financial statements.</p>	<p>LA to sign and return to Geoghegans to sign the audit report.</p>
	<p style="text-align: center;">Executive report – paper 2</p> <p>The Board commended the quality of the report and wanted to thank the ERCS team on their outputs over the past couple of months.</p> <p>In summary, the highlights from the last meeting were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - consolidating the advice service and agreeing a referral pathway for cases requiring legal representation and eligible for legal aid to Legal Services Agency - raising our advocacy profile with respect to Aarhus Compliance and invitation to be a member of the Human Rights Bill Advisory Board - Equality and Human Rights funding which will account for almost 30% of our income - AGM and recruitment of 66 members. <p>Advice service MC asked for further background on the memorandum of understanding with Legal Services Agency to pilot referring cases eligible for Legal Aid to them as the preferred provider for 6 months. The risks and opportunities as outlined in paper 2b were discussed and MC expressed thanks for the additional information.</p> <p>It was also noted that any decision for a long-term agreement will come to the Board for approval.</p>	



<p>Equalities and inclusion MC asked for background on choosing the provider for our training scheduled for January when the Rights Officer is in post. SF and JH provided this.</p> <p>The training will be over three sessions and facilitators were chosen under recommendation and experience.</p> <p>Finance Decisions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Board noted the budget, income and expenditure to date and confirmation that ERCS is able to meet its cash commitments for the next three months and a credible budget for the next six months (going concern test). - The Board noted and agreed to the following recommendations (1-3 have been previously discussed): <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To approve the In-house solicitor's increase from 21 to 24 hours p.week as of 1 October 2021. 2. To approve the recruitment of the Rights Officer 0.8 FTE in October. 3. To approve the Chief Officer's increase from 28 to 35 hours p. week as of 1 October 2021. 4. To approve advertising internally for legal researcher/support officer pending development of job description and recruitment policy. To begin from 1 November 2021. 	<p>SF to source trainer for 3rd session on racism/anti-racism and decolonialisation</p> <p>SF to action.</p>
<p>Business Plan – 2021 update – paper 3</p> <p>Trustees have reviewed the draft <i>Business Plan – 2021 update</i>, circulated 10 September, and are happy to approve. LA, CG, JE and JH commented that it was comprehensive summary.</p> <p>The paper is an update for the period July 2020 to December 2022. A full review will be undertaken next year including workshops with members to inform a new three strategic plan 2023-2026.</p> <p>The previous Business Plan was not on the website because so much changed so quickly. However, it was agreed that this update should be available.</p>	<p>SF to finalise <i>Business Plan – 2021 update</i> and upload to website.</p>



	<p>Dates of future quarterly meetings</p> <p>The next Board meeting is 16 November and then will move from bimonthly to quarterly on the third week of that month: Tuesday 2-5pm. Hopefully the May meeting will be face to face.</p> <p>Tuesday 15 February Tuesday 17 May Tuesday 16 August Tuesday 15 November</p> <p>There will be an additional meeting for the AGM in October 2022 tbc.</p>	<p>SF to circulate diary dates for 2022 Board meetings.</p>
	<p>The meeting was closed at 6pm.</p>	

These minutes were approved as an accurate record by the Board of Trustees on 16 November 2021.

Signed: Lloyd Austin, Chair