

Minutes of Sutton Mencap Charity Company

20th Annual General Meeting held 11th November 2020

Present: Mavis Peart, Kevin Dillon, Clare Fionda, Paul Solomon, Sue Stone, Derrick Copeman, Liz Rogers, Dennis Henstock, Michele Humphreys, Edwina Morris, Sally Marchant, Mike Marchant, Titilayo Dairo, Amit Srivastava.

In Attendance: David Hobday, Emma O'Connell

Apologies: Kevin Fisher, Pam Gray, Eve Clark

1. Welcome and Introductions

Mavis opened the meeting and welcomed all attendees to Sutton Mencap's first online AGM. Mavis welcomed the Trustees and noted how fortunate Sutton Mencap is to have a variety of expertise and experience on the Trustee Board.

2. Apologies for absence.

Apologies for absence were noted.

3. Minutes of AGM of 9th October 2019

The minutes of the previous AGM were agreed without amendments.

4. To receive and adopt the 2019/2020 Annual Report and Financial Statements

Mavis presented the 2019/2020 Annual Report and Financial Statements. She noted that the report covers the period April 2019 to March 2020, and was therefore only affected by COVID-19 in the last month.

Mavis explained the governance arrangements for Sutton Mencap and then went on to report on progress in relation to Sutton Mencap's strategic plan which runs from 2019 to 2024. The plan covers 3 key areas, as follows:

Service delivery

Our Children's services worked with 14% fewer children than the previous year. This is because 96% of the children we are working with have profound and complex needs – up 77% from last year. This increases the number of staff required per child, and also limits the space we have available.

Adult Services increased the number of people supported, with 39 services users attending the Community Day Service. Breakaways worked with 40 families providing respite for carers. There was a mix of other activities including Art Café, Groupies, High Fliers Zest and one-off events, all of which were well attended.

Community participation

Mavis explained how Sutton Mencap are working with other organisations, encouraging people with learning disabilities to be seen as part of the wider community. This work will be strengthened with the new Digital Paths to Inclusion project, which will support people to use digital technology to have a stronger voice.

Sutton Mencap was instrumental in setting up the Sutton Sports Inclusion group, which brings organisations together to improve access to sports facilities for disabled people. Sadly, the pandemic has had a significant impact on this work.

Sutton Mencap also worked with local hospitals as part of a wider initiative by the Royal Mencap Society, with the aim of making NHS services more accessible for people with learning disabilities. We have also taken part in LBS Learning Disability Mortality Review, trying to understand why people with learning disabilities are more likely to die earlier. We continue to work closely with Royal Mencap and other local Mencap organisations.

Service support

Mavis explained that this third part of the strategic plan covers the needs of the organisation. Premises are central to our service delivery. Our lease on Number 8 Stanley Park Road runs out in December 2022 and discussions have started with the council regarding this. We also upgraded our computer and telephone systems before the pandemic, which proved very useful as it allowed core staff to work from home. Mavis also noted that we benefit from a well-trained staff team, and over 1000 hours of training, supervision and support had been carried out over the year.

Mavis then addressed the impact of COVID-19 on Sutton Mencap's activities since March 2020. Children's services have remained open and have expanded during this time. Adult services moved online for a period of time, but during the summer we started a new community based 1 to 1 service, which proved very popular. We have now restarted day services, with smaller groups and are planning for the gradual return of other services, where it is safe to do so. Staff have been extremely diligent in infection control practises and there have been no cases of COVID so far. Mavis expressed admiration for the staff in managing to keep services running during the lockdown.

Mavis recognised the pressure on Sutton Mencap's finances due to the pandemic. Many staff were placed on furlough at the beginning of the lockdown and we have continued to use the furlough scheme to top up staff wages where staff are working less hours than prior to the pandemic.

Financial report

Paul then presented the financial statements. He noted that the accounts were ably prepared by Lynn, and he asked that his personal thanks to Lynn be recorded. Paul reported that the accounts had been examined by Kevin Fisher from Myrus Smith and there were no issues or concerns raised.

In the year 2019/20, income was £763,774, roughly £10,000 less than the previous year. Outgoings were £766,773, making a small deficit of £2,999 which will be taken from reserves. The main source of income was payment for services.

Paul also reported on the balance sheet which showed total assets of £212,823.

Mavis thanked Paul for his report and expressed her gratitude for his diligent role in overseeing the finances and opened the meeting for questions on the annual report and financial statements.

Derrick Copeman asked if, in the course of working with the NHS, Sutton Mencap included the liaison nurses, and Dave confirmed that this was the case.

Dennis Henstock asked if it would be possible to extend the lease, and Dave confirmed that he had opened discussions with the council and hopes these will be successful.

Dennis asked if the Breakaways Weekends Away service could resume. Dave explained that due to the pandemic, it was currently not possible to provide the service, but it would return as soon as it was safe to do so.

Mavis thanked Dave and the staff and volunteers for their hard work and commitment.

The Trustees report was agreed.

5. Appointment of Independent Examiner

The appointment of Kevin Fisher from Myrus Smith as Independent Examiner was agreed.

6. Authorising Trustees to set remuneration of Independent Examiner.

It was agreed that the board should be authorised to set remuneration of Independent Examiner.

7. Nomination of Trustees:

Mavis reported that there were no new nominations for the board of trustees. Members were asked to approve the re-election of trustees as follows:

Titilayo Dairo
Kevin Dillon
Clare Fionda
Dennis Henstock
Michele Humphreys
Edwina Morris
Mavis Peart OBE
Michelle Perrett
Amit Srivastava
Paul Solomon

Sally Marchant proposed the re-election of the Trustees, and Sue Stone seconded her. The Trustees were re-elected.

8. Any other business

Mavis reported that the trustees had found it necessary to make two posts redundant, which would sadly result in the loss of two long-standing and highly-regarded staff members, Emma O'Connell and Rosemary Frost. On behalf of the board, she asked that thanks to both people be recorded.

The meeting closed at 8.00pm.